

INTERRACIAL REVIEW

A JOURNAL FOR CHRISTIAN DEMOCRACY



DEMOCRACY IN THE NEW YORK HOUSING PROGRAM

Ernest E. Johnson

•

THE PARISH CO-OP SUCCEEDS

Edward J. Hogarty

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PLAYS AND A POINT OF VIEW

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MR. RANDOLPH IS RIGHT

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Castel Gandolfo, Oct. 27 (A.P.). — Pope Pius XII in the first Encyclical of his reign blamed "the denial of God" for leading the world to war and pleaded for peace today.

— *The New York Sun*

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THE REGISTRAR

INTERRACIAL REVIEW

OCTOBER — 1941

Vol. XIV

No. 10

Christian Democracy

Christian Democracy rejects artificial inequalities due to racial myths, material greed or physical violence and recognizes only such accidental inequalities as necessarily accompany human life at all times and in all places.

As the objective of the Catholic interracial program, we define Christian Democracy as a society in which the God-given dignity and destiny of every human person is fully recognized, in laws, government, institutions and human conduct.

POSTULATES

- The Catholic Interracial Program has a twofold aim: (1) the combating of race prejudice; (2) the attainment of social justice for the whole social group regardless of race.

- "Nothing does more harm to the progress of Christianity and is more against its spirit than . . . race prejudice amongst Christians. — There is nothing more widely spread in the Christian world."
— *Jacques Maritain*

- "From the evidence on hand today, we cannot scientifically prove that the Nordic or the Negro is superior or inferior, one to the other."
— *Rev. John M. Cooper*

- The interracial problem is the greatest world problem of today. It is the major threat to international peace. In America the interracial problem is one of grave national concern. It is perhaps the biggest problem confronting the Catholic Church in America.

- "Intolerance towards Negroes in the United States is perhaps the acme of the racial intolerance of modern nationalism."
— *Carlton J. H. Hayes*

- The spiritual aspect of the Catholic interracial program flows from the common membership of all races in the Mystical Body of Christ and the common expression of this unity in the Church's liturgy.

- Prejudice on the part of Catholic laity is a barrier to the conversion of the Negro and a trial to the new found Faith of the Negro convert.

- "We must concede that the natural rights of the Negro are identical in number and sacredness to the rights of white persons."
— *Rev. Francis J. Gilligan, S.T.D.*

- Catholic principles maintaining the equality of all men and upholding the sanctity of the Negro's natural rights, impose upon all Catholics a rule of conduct which must be followed, regardless of any temporary inconveniences, apprehensions or difficulties that may be encountered.

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INTERRACIAL REVIEW

The INTERRACIAL REVIEW is published monthly at 20 Vesey Street, New York, N. Y. Ten cents per copy; one dollar per year.

Entered as second-class matter, November 13, 1934, at the post office at New York, N. Y., under the Act of March 3, 1879. Acceptance for mailing at special rate of postage provided for in Section 1103, Act of October 3, 1917, authorized January 28, 1929.

Address all communications regarding advertising to the INTERRACIAL REVIEW at the above address. Telephone, REctor 2-5417.

The Interracial Field

INTERESTING STATISTICS

Number of Negroes in U. S.....	13,000,000
Estimated Number of Protestant Negroes...	5,000,000
Estimated Number of Catholic Negroes.....	300,000
Estimated Number Unchurched.....	7,750,000
Number of Negroes Attending Colleges....	23,038

Number of Catholic Negro Churches.....	282
Number of Catholic Negro Schools.....	263
Negro Enrollment in Catholic Schools.....	50,000
Priests Engaged in Colored Missions.....	450
Sisters Engaged in Colored Missions.....	1,600

Negroes in New York City	478,346
Negroes in Chicago	233,000
Negroes in Philadelphia.....	219,000
Negroes in Washington.....	132,068

The Race Problem

“Many questions deeply influencing the life of individuals and of nations center today around the problem of race. Political plans and social reforms, international attitude and personal belief, even the evaluation of science and education, are now being decided in many parts of the world on the basis of race. Opinions on the meaning, the influence, the origin of races are widely divided, the more so, since objective science and impartial examination of facts have become rare. Impassioned, even fanatic belief in some new formula has replaced scientific investigation. The idea of race, not as a notion of objective science, but as an article of faith, has been accepted by thousands of people. Race hatred and wars have arisen from this creed. Personal dignity has been trodden down because of the belief in the superiority of one race and the inferiority of another. . . . The cultural unity of mankind has been disrupted. Moral principles which the Western World had held in high esteem for more than a thousand years are rejected by many, because Humanity is thrown into the most horrible disorder, and the most excessive sufferings it has ever known because of race sentiment getting the upper hand and dethroning the love of one's neighbor, the respect for man's soul, and the appreciation of man's achievements.”

From preface of “*Scientific Aspects of the Race Problem*,” written by the Most Rev. Joseph M. Corrigan, D. D., President, Catholic University.

This Month and Next

An interesting account of the policy of the New York Housing Authority with regard to the inclusion of different racial groups in the same projects is contributed this month by ERNEST E. JOHNSON. This article is entitled, “Democracy at Work in New York's Housing Program.” MR. JOHNSON, a Brooklyn Negro, is employed in the Department of Public Works of the City of New York. He was born and educated in this city and for eight years was a newspaper reporter. He has contributed articles to “*The Crisis*,” “*Opportunity*” and “*Scribner's*.” We believe this excellent paper will be of particular interest to those associated with public housing programs in other cities . . . Our readers will recall the first article we published regarding the interracial cooperative grocery store located in Holy Rosary Parish, Brooklyn. This article, by the Rev. Thomas I. Conerty appeared in the *Interracial Review* of June, 1940. This month we are glad to publish a second paper telling of the progress made since this pioneer cooperative store was started. The author is EDWARD J. HOGARTY, M.A., who has lived near the Holy Rosary Parish for many years. Mr. HOGARTY is a professor of Social Science at St. John's University, Brooklyn. He was formerly a reporter with the *New York Times*. He is the Past President of the St. John's Speakers Association. This article shows that New York's first interracial cooperative store is doing well. . . . MARGARET McCORMACK, who regularly conducts the Youth Column, has favored us with many excellent poems as well as Book Reviews. This month she contributes an excellent review of a new book of poems by Maurice Fields . . . We have another excellent Book Review by MISS MARY O'NEIL of Akron, Ohio. Miss O'Neil, a regular contributor, is a graduate of Trinity College, Washington, D. C.

* * *

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20 Vesey Street, New York, N. Y.

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Vol. XIV

OCTOBER, 1941

No. 10

MR. RANDOLPH IS RIGHT

As reported in the *New York Times*, A. Philip Randolph, representing the Brotherhood of Sleeping-Car Porters delivered a forceful address at the Convention of the American Federation of Labor in Seattle. Condemning the Jim Crow policy of excluding Negroes from membership in labor organizations, he presented a strong bill of particulars, stating the names of the AFL unions which continue to exclude Negroes on the ground of color.

In striking contrast, however, to this clear and forthright indictment of the offending unions, the leaders of the convention merely expressed the fervent hope that these wrongs would be righted. At the same time, they successfully blocked Mr. Randolph's proposal that a committee be authorized to make a survey to determine the extent of the discrimination "within the Internationals and Locals of the AFL." Mr. Randolph asked for action that seemed likely to produce results. This was refused. Instead, the Convention "reaffirmed the stand taken last year in New Orleans."

The Interracial Review is convinced that the task of eradicating this undemocratic and unAmerican policy from all labor unions is the responsibility of each and every member of every labor organization. It must be obvious that labor, as a whole, will be subject to well-justified criticism so long as trade unions deny, either the right to work, or the right to a living wage, by excluding Negroes from membership.

We believe that the many Catholic labor leaders throughout the country have an additional responsibility in combating these practices which so directly violate the teachings of the great Encyclicals.

We feel that the Catholic Press of America which has consistently upheld the rights, the dignities, and the responsibilities of organized labor, should take a definite stand in advocating the elimination of racial discrimination from all unions.

Unless labor bans discrimination within its ranks and becomes actually representative of *all* labor it must expect to be criticized. The elimination of Jim

Crowism in International or Local organizations is the responsibility of all AFL leaders—whether they realize it or not.

We congratulate Mr. Randolph upon the excellence and timeliness of his address. Coming at a time when the American people realize, more than ever, the importance of national unity and the necessity of maintaining the rights and privileges inherent in the American way of life, his views should have a wide influence.

Football History Is Made

When students of the interracial question turn their attention to the sports world, it is not necessarily in search of vicarious thrills. As sociologists, they are less interested in the excitement of athletic contests than in their potential value in the fostering of better race relations. Take the case of Joe Louis. In addition to achieving phenomenal success, the Negro champion has done much to increase respect for his race among white sportsmen. It has been heartening to observe the flood of praise poured upon the doughty head of one of the squarest and cleanest fighters in the history of pugilism. But the interracialist has something more significant to ponder. If, as in other branches of sport, the Negro had been banned from pitting his skill against a white opponent, the world would have missed seeing a modest young man from Detroit deliver repeated KO's to the chin of Old Man Prejudice. Caught up in the crowds' roars were paens to democracy sweet to American ears.

But professional pugilism is one thing and intercollegiate football is another. As readers of the Review are well aware, some of our proudest centers of higher education have failed, through refusal to permit Negro students to participate in intercollegiate contests, either to live up to democracy's creed or to contribute toward the elimination of racial bias among their students. Heads were bowed in dejection when bright husky young athletes were told that because their skins were dark they could not be permitted to face white challengers across the scrimmage line.

There have been certain rare individual exceptions to lighten an otherwise dismal picture. Never, however, in the history of American intercollegiate foot-

ball did opposing teams of Negro and white players face each other. That is to say, not until the early part of this month. Interracial history was made when West Virginia State College for Negroes went forth to do battle against Rio Grande of Ohio and emerged, incidentally, as winner by a score of 47 to 6. Said publicity director, Thomas Posey, "We have made every effort to find out if there have been other football games between white and Negro teams, but without results. Certainly none have been played this far South before."

We hope that this will prove an opening wedge for the spirit of authentic Americanism. Convinced that the qualities of sportsmanship, physical stamina and skill are as much in evidence among Negro as among white players, we believe that from frequent interracial contests there will develop a truer conception of Negro athletes. Admiring their skill and sportsmanship, the football enthusiast will stand and cheer as loudly as his brother at the ringside when Joe Louis emerges from his corner.

Progress — But Not Enough

From "The Call," Kansas City, Mo., we learn that after a year of effort by the local branch of the "Urban League and other organizations," 17 Negro painters were admitted into "Local 1386 of the United Brotherhood of Painters, Decorators and Paperhangers."

We learn, further, that the painters are the third group of skilled Negro workers to gain union membership since the start of the National Defense program. The others were the carpenters and the bricklayers.

Yes, this is somewhat gratifying. It indicates progress on the part of unions. Nevertheless we believe that the general reaction to this reluctant yielding on the part of labor leaders to these appeals for the granting of fundamental human rights will be highly critical of the reactionary policy of organized labor.

Indeed, it is disappointing that so many of the steps in interracial progress must be taken singly—one by one. There can be no reason—at least during the defense crisis—why employers and labor leaders should not take a forthright, a just and practical stand with regard to the fundamental, democratic,

natural rights: the right to work and the right to a living wage.

It is to be hoped that industry and labor will have the good sense to adopt a new and enlightened policy with respect to Negro labor, instead of taking a few forward steps as the result of pressure and publicity of organized campaigns.

"All I Can Do Is Beg"

With these words the Very Rev. Francis M. Casey, Superior of the Society of St. Edmund, adverted recently to the plight of the Colored missions in the South. "None of our missions in the South is self-supporting, and most of them will not be for years hence," he said.

As we have frequently pointed out, the needs of the colored missions is one of the outstanding reasons why more Catholics should participate in the interracial program. We believe that the continued growth of the Catholic Interracial movement will find a larger percentage of the laity interested in the spiritual and material welfare of the Negro, and that from this interest will inevitably accrue a greater measure of support for the disadvantaged colored missions.

"Fifty Fruitful Years"

In Georgia, where he was a pioneer in missionary work among the Colored people, the Very Reverend Ignatius P. Lissner, of the Society of the African Missions, was honored in Savannah on last Sunday, the occasion being a part of the observance of Father Lissner's golden jubilee in the priesthood.

No place where he has exercised his priestly ministry appreciates more than Georgia the piety and apostolic zeal which Father Lissner has shown in the half-century of his life that he has devoted to bringing the blessing of the Catholic Faith to so many of our Colored people.

Father Lissner's friends in Georgia, and they are many, extend him hearty and sincere congratulations on the fiftieth anniversary of his ordination, as they offer prayers that he will be spared for many more years of faithful missionary service.—*Bulletin of the Catholic Layman's Association of Georgia.*

Notes From

XAVIER UNIVERSITY

The First Catholic College for Negro Youth

TEACHER'S CONVENTION

The annual convention of the Louisiana Colored Teachers' Association will be held in New Orleans on November 16-19. The Dean of Xavier, Sister M. Madeline Sophie, S.B.S., will serve as chairman at one of the major sessions of the convention which will discuss "the college."

The theme of this year's convention is "Education, Democracy and National Defense." A number of papers on various aspects of this subject will be presented by prominent Louisiana educators. Already plans have been completed for the session to be held at the University. Sister Madeleine has announced that the general theme of the college session is: "The Role of the College in Education, Democracy and National Defense . . . Education, a preparation for citizenship; Democracy, a living citizenship—planning and affecting it; and National Defense, a protection of citizenship." Invitations have been extended to four other Louisiana colleges: Dillard, Leland, Louisiana Normal, and Southern, to attend the session at Xavier. The Dean of Xavier has requested members of the faculty of each of the colleges to present papers.

LIVING ROSARY

Students are looking forward to the annual presentation of the "Living Rosary" in the University Stadium. This is a beautiful spectacle of hundreds of students holding lighted candles in honor of Christ the King through reverence for His Blessed Mother. Each year this event is attended by a large number of Orleanians.

ALUMNI HOME-COMING

Alumni and student body are cooperating to make the annual "Home-coming Game" of the current grid season a gala occasion. Great interest has been manifested in the contest to select "Miss Xavier, Queen of Home-coming," and in the game between Xavier Gold Rush and the Morris Brown Wolverines, National Football Champions of 1940.

DEMOCRACY AT WORK IN THE NEW YORK HOUSING PROGRAM

By ERNEST E. JOHNSON

Public housing in the United States is definitely one of the outstanding social reforms of the past decade. But a very important by-product, representing something of a social change, is the day-by-day, side-by-side living of Negro and white families in many of these projects established in New York City. This is in direct contrast to the practice in other parts of the country—and even in this same State—where the question inevitably arises in connection with a new housing development: Will it be for whites or will it be for Negroes?

Unostentatiously, but with an awareness of what it has been doing, the New York City Housing Authority, first agency set up as the landlord for municipal developments under the terms of the various housing laws, in the seven years of its existence, has shown comparatively little or no partiality between the races in the filling of apartment requests in each succeeding project completed under its jurisdiction. The record which shows that in no less than nine such developments, Negroes and whites occupy the same buildings and adjoining apartments with little or no friction, proves to the skeptic that it can be done. And New York has a sufficient number of projects to give importance to this arrangement—eleven in all to September 30, 1941. The exceptions are First Houses and Harlem River Houses.

The city was not entirely free of criticism by either side in the early days of public housing. Even cosmopolitan New York has not heretofore voluntarily undertaken to disturb what appeared to be a tradition or custom. Except in a few areas of private two or three-story dwellings, ghetto living for the Negro was

an established fact. The expeditured public funds, however, provoked the question: Since the Negro is a taxpayer, does he not have the same right to apply for and be accepted on the same basis as whites in any housing project opened? Certainly, the question was not unreasonable.

First Houses on the Lower East Side was built in December, 1935, out of federal funds, in a non-Negro area, and represented the initial experiment anywhere in the United States by government in public housing. The Authority at that time was not confronted with the question of policy in tenancing the project since no Negroes had applied. The matter of bi-racial occupancy did not push to the fore until the tenancy of the federally-financed Williamsburg Houses was being considered. With accommodations for 1622 families, in contrast to the 122 at First Houses, and in one of the few communities that indeed included the two races even if in disproportionate numbers, Negroes expected at least token representation as a gesture that consideration was being given to their protests. The result was that there was a sprinkling of Negro families among those that moved into the partially completed project in September 1936. Inasmuch as no record is kept of the racial complexion of tenants, a specific figure was not obtainable as to the number now in residence, but it was said to be many more than at the outset.



Ernest E. Johnson



Having lunch in the Nursery at South Jamaica Houses

Harlem River Houses were built and opened in September, 1937, in a location void of residential buildings but in upper Harlem. Perhaps the strong pressure exerted by social groups who knew intimately the dire need for a housing development in Harlem is the reason why this project (ever) took shape. The tenancy was and is exclusively Negro. One explanation is advanced for this exclusiveness—and a logical one it is. At a time when long-range planning in public housing had not yet become possible and when it was not known whether there would be any other projects, it might have been a case of leaning over backwards in order to show the democratic spirit to have put whites in the project when Negroes were so wretchedly in need of improved housing.

The United States Housing Act of 1937 carries no clause prohibiting discrimination against racial groups for the benefits of the Act. Certainly this was a desirable clause. But the record of Senator Wagner shows that he has not been one to sponsor legislation for the few when the many were in need. Nor does the Act enabling the State of New York to enter the field of public housing carry any such clause.

Of course, the fact may always be cited that funds for these two programs invariably must come from the taxpayers, and taxpayers are not generally exempted from the enjoyment of such worthy benefits that they are asked to finance. On the other hand, if in many another area of the country and State the law has been interpreted differently by local authorities, it may be construed as the right of reasonable men to differ reasonably. However, the tongue may even then find place in the cheek. In New York the Authority has tried to give genuinely democratic meaning to the laws.

"We have felt all along," Mr. Frank Didisheim, Secretary to the Authority, stated, "that our handling of applications should be done in accordance with the principles of both the Federal and State Constitution, which countenance no discrimination for any reason.

"We have developed no philosophy with regard to housing Negroes and whites no more than we would have done had there been but one group to consider in the first place. This policy stems from the general non-discriminatory policy we have in New York State. In fact, the racial identity of applicants is not asked for on our application blanks and is not known until the applicant is investigated in his present home.



*The tenants are neighborly
Opportunities are provided for rest
and recreation*

"We believe that the composition of a project should follow the general lines of the neighborhood prior to the construction of the project. This principle, too, is generally followed."

The experiences of the managers of several of the projects were examined to best evaluate how practicable in its application is this policy of the Authority. At Williamsburg, for example, it has worked wonderfully well, according to Manager Wesley Vollner. Mr. Vollner, incidentally, was responsible for the tenanting of the East River Houses and the Kingsborough Houses, both recently opened. This experience plus the knowledge he has gained while manager of the Red Hook Houses—and now Williamsburg—should give validity and value to his observations.

"When I tell you that the harmony is unbelievable," he said, "you may think me exaggerating. The truth is that friction has never come to my attention, as it logically would, and there has never been a complaint of a racial nature one way or the other."

Mr. Vollner told how at the organization meeting of the tenants' council for East River the desire was repeatedly expressed by the membership itself that every race and nationality in the project should be encouraged to participate in council activities.

Red Hook's current manager, Alexander Moffatt, sized up his problem, if such it be, in the following words: "The relationship here has been cordial at all times. If we kept records they would show that the

preponderance of friction—and you can always expect a little—is between families of the same racial group rather than white and Negro families.

Example of good-will was indicated in the case of a Negro family, the only one in this particular building, where the mother had died and left a husband and two children. To assist in meeting the sudden expense occasioned by death and to show their sympathy, the other tenants of the building voluntarily took up a collection among themselves and presented it to the husband.

East River also contributes an exemplary instance. Mrs. Levy (though that is not her real name) died, leaving her child practically on orphan, since her husband had earlier deserted. Next door lived a Negro family, the Brown (name also assumed), with whom Mrs. Levy had been friendly. When Mrs. Brown learned of the unfortunate incident, she took Mrs. Levy's child into her home. Recalling the casual mention of Mrs. Levy that she had a sister on the Lower East Side, Mrs. Brown waited for her husband to return from work so that he might attend to the child while she journeyed downtown in search of the sister, the only relative. She found the sister—and a home for the baby.

To illustrate more completely the spirit of neighborliness and enthusiasm for joint participation in activities existing in the projects, South Jamaica is notable. The proportion of tenancy is 70 percent Negro and 30 percent white out of a total of 448 families, and represents every race and nationality except from the Orient. The tenants composing this heterogeneous group, shop together, conduct their tenant association together, organize their baseball and tennis teams together, use the identical day nursery and craft shops, and plan and enjoy their social functions together.

Strolling along the wide walks we see children of both races playing together without compulsion and without restraint, apparently unmindful of any differences. Sitting on the benches that dot the edges of the walks mothers are found in friendly conversation, perhaps about menus or a good movie, at the same time minding their babies or those of their neighbors. The men folk too can be seen mulling over topics of common interest. This project boasts a small truck garden where the tenants raise a variety of vegetables as well as flowers. The work is done

by the agriculturally inclined of both races, and all take equal pride in its productiveness.

Nandin J. Oswell—one of the two Negroes managing projects for the NYCHA—is mild-mannered but with a grip on himself. If he has a consciousness that the arrangement at South Jamaica is distinctly unusual as a general thing, his appearance certainly gives no indication. To him, it would seem, there is nothing experimental about the whole thing but rather it's a case of live and let live.

Now all this has not come about because the tenants have been literally slugged into an acceptance of a set of laudable principles of democracy and the American Way. Nor has any subtle compulsion to get together as a defense mechanism or to avoid social ostracism had any part, for, on the whole, the proportions give each race a sufficient number to feel reasonably secure unto itself and amply provided with social contact without recourse to the other race.

Apparently, then, it is possible to mitigate, if not completely nullify, the influence exerted by a suggested (as contrasted to an indicated) mass censorship of the individual's personal acts or ambitions, simply through free association. Under these conditions it becomes normal for two peoples or two races to seek out the things they hold in common and produce a reaction dictated by their own natural inclinations and not the reaction forced upon them by the latent influence represented by tradition. This, indeed, is democracy at work, democracy put to the test.

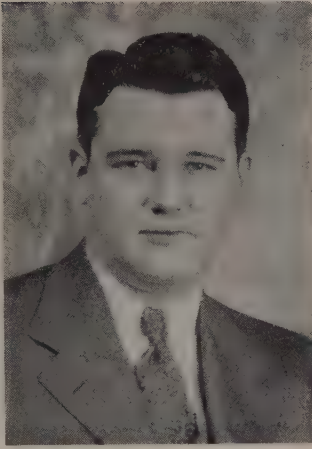
In any discussion among sociologists of the element of community expression, most will agree that project life can very well be the means of destroying man-made barriers that keep people apart, such as the accidental differences of nationality, or race, or the tradition of *racial prejudice*.

At the same time, according to the current papers, we learn that in Jersey City, where a housing project has been constructed in a community where Negro and white families have lived side by side for more than thirty years, the applications of Negroes are being rejected. Certainly, one with a social consciousness and a catholic concern for humanity cannot but hope that the straightforward policy exemplified by the New York City Housing Authority in its handling of what some choose to treat as a weighty problem may find more general repetition elsewhere.

THE PARISH CO-OP SUCCEEDS

By EDWARD J. HOGARTY

Picture to yourself a poorer section of a great metropolis, where white people and Negroes live side by side. Most of the former, and a smaller number of the latter, are parishioners of the local Catholic Church. That is their sole bond of unity. Imagine, further, that in order to better their conditions, these people decide to form—of all things—a cooperative! An idealistic fancy? Not at all, for it has been done.



Edward J. Hogarty

The story of such an unusual enterprise in racial and economic improvement revolves around the adventuresome—but practical—action of the people of Holy Rosary Parish, in the Stuyvesant Heights section of Brooklyn. There the parishioners, led by an energetic young priest, have set up a credit union and a cooperative food store. The credit union was founded first. Known as the Chauncey Federal Credit Union, it is now in its fourth year. It was the first Catholic parish credit union in New York City. The store, the Stuyvesant Height Cooperative, will be two years old in November. Both are financially sound and eloquently demonstrate the inspiring leadership of the Rev. Thomas I. Conerty, assistant at Holy Rosary.

But how did this unusual parochial enterprise really begin? Father Conerty explains it first of all as an attempt to stem the spread of Communism among the people. His plans initially took form after he had delivered a series of radio lectures under the sponsorship of the Knights of Columbus, in which he stressed the idea that Communism could only be obliterated by removing the social evils out of which it mushroomed. Later, he made a tour of Nova Scotia and studied the cooperatives there at first hand. Finally, he determined that the foundation of parish cooperatives was the best means of enabling the mixed peoples of his parish to improve their social and economic well-being.

The first step in the establishment of the parish credit union was made through the Holy Rosary Holy Name Society, of which Father Conerty was moderator. A study club of fourteen members took up the question. When all details had been worked out, a group of forty-one members combined to form the union. The shares were sold at \$5 each. The union was incorporated under Federal law and became a voluntary member of the New York State Credit League.

Since its start the Chauncey Union has loaned to its members a total of \$23,000, and it has lost only \$115. in bad debts. Interest is at the rate of one per cent a month on the unpaid balance. This is the maximum rate. On an unsecured loan, a member may borrow a total of \$50. plus the amount of his ownership. If he has \$25. in shares he may borrow up to \$75. On loans secured by co-signers, the maximum amount is ten per cent of the total capital of the union. At present, the average loan is about \$35. Members borrow to meet taxes, buy clothes, pay the doctor, dentist and landlord, or to get in food and coal. The funds go for the necessities of everyday living.

The credit union now has a capital value of \$6,500, disposed as follows: \$3,000 loaned to members; \$2,200 loaned to other credit unions; and \$1,300 deposited in the bank. At the end of its first year, a dividend of 2% was paid. The same return was made at the close of the second year, and at the third year a 3½% dividend was received by the members.

The dividends closely approximate the rate of profits since the costs of the credit union are low. The union is tax exempt and labor is voluntary. Rent of \$25 annually is paid to the parish for the use of a room in the church buildings. Bookkeeping supplies constitute the main costs, varying directly with the amount of business done. Likewise the cost of life insurance for the borrower is borne by the union so that in case of death the loan is liquidated. Each year the Farm Credit Administration conducts an examination of the union's books and this cost comes out of its funds, as well as dues to the State League.

The success of the Chauncey Federal Credit Union paved the way for the establishment of the cooperative food store at Holy Rosary Parish. Members of the

credit union formed the nucleus of membership in the co-op store. In fact, many shares in the new store were purchased through funds borrowed from the union. However, unlike the credit union, membership in the Stuyvesant Co-op is not limited to parishioners. Anybody may join. Shares are \$10. and at this time there are 115 members, white and Negro.



Rev. Thomas I. Conerty

The cooperative store has a wide community influence. It benefits its non-member customers as well as those who are members. Since food, both in quantity and in quality, plays such a tremendous role in everyday existence, the good accomplished is widespread. Moreover, since the vast number of the people in the neighborhood of the store are in the lower income brackets—with fifty-five per cent of them Negroes—the cooperative is a limitless power for sociological and economic improvement.

The Stuyvesant Cooperative is a member of the Eastern Cooperative Wholesale, Inc., Brooklyn. The groceries sold in the store are purchased through this central agency, which maintains a testing kitchen. All goods are graded and bear the informative "Co-op" label. The Eastern Cooperative Wholesale is one of eleven central cooperative agencies now spread over the nation.

Despite a loss of \$263 at the end of its first year—which was due to a summer slump in 1940—the Stuyvesant Cooperative pulled out of the red in March of this year. It is now grossing about \$600 a week. Just recently the directors spent \$575 for a new refrigerator for dairy products. The money was borrowed

from the parish credit union at a special rate of five-twelfths of one per cent per month.

In its selling prices, the Stuyvesant Cooperative is on a par with the large chain store or super-market and generally it undersells the small independent merchant. Staples, such as butter, milk and sugar, are sold, as in most private stores, at practically cost prices. Where it does not undersell, the co-op gives better value at the same price.

The cooperative does not go in for "loss-price leaders." It does not hold special sales of standard brands at cost price in order to draw customers into the store to buy other commodities at regular markup. The cooperative gives a greater saving to the consumer on the total gross purchases, and the consumer is not coerced but guided to better values by informative labeling.

According to grade, labels are colored red, blue or green. Red denotes the best quality; blue means very good; and green covers goods of standard quality. Facts on the label include the size of pieces, general condition, flavor, official U. S. Standards rating, type, size of can, weight of contents, possible servings and total supfulls. On some items, as in the case of coffee, the geographical source of the product is given. All such data, of course, unerringly directs the consumer in fulfilling his needs at the best possible prices. In other words, the individual thus enjoys a higher standard of living since he is able to have more goods with his money income.

In its ideals and methods the Stuyvesant Cooperative is no different from any other similar venture, but in its problems and the conditions under which it operates it is decidedly distinctive. As already has been stated, this cooperative has been established in a poorer section of the city. Naturally, since the people have relatively meagre incomes, the amount they spend for food is low. The bulk of many family expenditures are for staples, on which, of course, the store cannot make a successful operating margin. On other items, some families are either satisfied with inferior goods, and others follow the loss-price leaders. Some families pay higher prices at the independent grocer because they are extended credit.

The Stuyvesant Cooperative is an example of racial and religious cooperation. Most of the people are Negroes, and the vast majority of the colored are non-Catholic. Many Negroes deal in the store, but 'more members and leaders are needed. Undoubtedly,

there would even be a larger representation of members from among white residents, if so many of them did not feel that the co-op was isolated from their future since they expect to move out of the neighborhood. Since the cooperative has arisen under Catholic sponsorship, those not of the faith may for a time withhold their patronage.

Yet in these very difficulties are the seeds of success. The Stuyvesant Cooperative, as a pioneer undertaking, will stand as an example of the achievement of the cooperative ideal. All literature on the subject of cooperatives reiterates the theory that cooperatives are the democratic way of better living for those of low incomes, the way of better racial understanding and joint action, and the way of tolerance of one's neighbor. The Stuyvesant Cooperative is translating the theory into action.

"This store has every problem a co-op ever had," said Joseph C. Slakas, the manager. But he made the statement not as one envisioning a hopeless task, but rather to emphasize the opportunity for successful cooperation. "Slowly, but surely," he added, "we are forging ahead. If conditions continue as they are

now, we will be able to pay purchase dividends. Then watch us sprint."

In telling the story of this pioneer interracial venture it is easy to stress the accomplishments and the future possibilities of Holy Rosary Parish in the field of cooperation. But one must not lose sight of the amount of hard work entailed in such a project.

"The problem of consumer education is all important," Father Conerty advised. "It is difficult to get the people to study and to take an active part in community programs. One has to search out the leaders of the community. Often you will run up against stony indifference or find that possible workers are devoting their time to other activities. Our four Advisory Council groups are our principal means of self-education in consumer problems."

But Father Conerty is confident that the sphere of consumer cooperatives will become increasingly wider in the future. He envisions the organization of credit unions on a diocesan basis, with a union in every parish.

"Most parishes need them," he said. "The poorer people are, the greater is the price they must pay for



Stuyvesant Co-op Store is attractive and has a wide community influence beneficial to member and non-member customers

all things on credit. Often, they pay exorbitant rates to illegal money lenders. Too many families are struggling under a crushing pyramid of debt.

"Moreover," he continued, "the credit union is the foundation of any other cooperative enterprise which a particular group may wish to set up. In the past food cooperatives and credit cooperatives have been unwisely separated."

The cooperatives at Holy Rosary Parish are a pattern of practical Catholic action. They enable Catholic parishioners to help themselves, as well as many others outside the church. They will play an important part in the reconstruction of the social order by enlisting the interest and participation of Catholic leaders. A successful cooperative indicates that apathy and inertia have been overcome. Furthermore this particular kind of parish cooperative will serve to demonstrate the importance and effectiveness of interracial cooperation.

Member of Student Council



Miss Consuelo Romero, daughter of Mr. and Mrs. Emanuel Romero, 351 West 120th Street, New York, has been elected to the Student Council Governing Board of the College of St. Benedict, St. Joseph, Minnesota, where she is a Junior. Miss Romero became a member of the Board by having been selected secretary of the Junior class.



PLAYS And A Point Of View

By THEOPHILUS LEWIS

AN ENGLISHMAN IN WAR

One of the earliest plays of the current season, and, according to the consensus of critical opinion, far and away the best serious production that has appeared so far, is "The Wookey," a war play imported from England. "The Wookey" is housed in Plymouth, and high among its merits is the skillfully synchronized performance of a sextette of experienced troupers who combine their talents in an exhibition of acting excellence that is encountered all too rarely in our theater. Mr. Wookey—the leading character is played by Edmund Gwenn, Mrs. Wookey, his wife, Ernie and Primrose Wookey, his son and daughter, and Aunt Gen, his sister-in-law, are played respectively by Norah Howard, George Sturgeon, Heather Angel, and Corol Goodner. Rory McSwiggin, Mr. Wookey's prospective son-in-law, is interpreted by Horace McNally, who was first exposed to footlight lure while participating in undergraduate theatricals in Fordham.

All the performers handle their roles so expertly that it would be embarrassing to mention margins of merit, if any exist. The characters played by Mr. Gwenn, Mr. Sturgeon and Miss Goodner call for robust interpretations, while those assigned to Miss Howard and Miss Angel are definitely on the delicate side. Mr. McNally takes charge of what I imagine is one of the most difficult assignments an actor can be asked to interpret—that of the mercurial and explosive Irishman with a heart of gold. That all the principals handle their roles capably has already been observed. The supporting members of the cast, some twenty in number, are also equal to the tasks assigned them.

On the productive side, Jo Mielzinger, who designed the scenery, rates two stars plus, while the director, not named in the playbill, rates at least three. Edgard Selwyn, the producer, rates a ruffle of drums and a bugle salute. All of them together have done a grand job for which every audience that enjoys "The Wookey" should give them a standing vote of gratitude.

"The Wookey" is the kind of play that is not only enjoyable in the theater but also gives the mind substance to take home for pleasurable rumination. Mr. Wookey is symbolical of middle class England—that is, the lower middle class which is more or less conscious of its community of interests with labor. His home is in London's East End dock area and he is the owner and captain of a tugboat. The story opens on the afternoon when the Prime Minister dispatched his ulti-

matum to the German Government, which everybody knew meant war.

Mr Wookey is critical of the Government's policy; not that he is opposed to the war in principle, but he is convinced that the foreign policy of the big shots and brass hats somehow blundered the nation into a perilous position and fears that they may be as inept in war as they were in diplomacy. He withholds his support from the Government and decides to have nothing to do with the war. But events rather than his decision control his acts. Hence one is not surprised when he takes his tug across the Channel to help rescue the Tommies from the beaches around Dunkirk or when he tows a crippled British destroyer to safety, or when he later consents to become an air raid warden.

What Mr. Wookey does, however, is far less important than what he is; and less interesting too. If he were not so rich in human juices, one might mistake him for a mere lay figure created to exemplify the integrity of spirit which makes the Englishman, in spite of his numerous faults, so admirable among the breeds of men. Nazi bombers, trying to destroy his native London, obliterate precious landmarks of his English heritage, wreck the docks where he earns his living, blast his roof from over his head and kill his wife. In the midst of general havoc and personal disaster Mr. Wookey carries on. He keeps his sanity and maintains his poise, never once descending to that bitterness of spirit which is so often the luxury of those far removed from the scene of peril. He does not permit war to detour him from the charted course of his life. He goes on counseling his relatives and neighbors and planning for the welfare of what is left of his family. Mr Wookey is a fine Englishman to know. He would be a fine man to know no matter what flag waved over his roof.

He has his faults of course. His mannerisms are rather on the pompous side and he has an air of self-importance. But is there any worthwhile man under the sun without a touch of the latter vice? Like altogether too many men, he has been seduced by the modern superstition that religion should be reserved for the exclusive concern of women and younger children. After framing a sincere and beautiful prayer for the deliverance of England, he requests his wife and daughter to present the supplication to the Creator, urging them to keep him "strictly out of it."

With so remarkably vigorous a character dominating its action, it hardly needs to be mentioned that "The Wookey" is an interesting and even a stirring play. Indeed, it can be accepted as an axiom of criticism that authentic and challenging characterization will make any play interesting, no matter how trite its plot happens to be. The reason is because a vivid personality, whether a son of Adam or a creation of one of Adam's sons who calls himself a playwright, imparts its color to all its relationships with life. It is apparent that the author of "The Wookey," Frederick Hazlitt Brennan, did not spend a great deal of sweat trying to devise a startling plot. He simply created half a dozen persuasive characters (as though that were a simple task) and threw them into the turmoil of life. The result is an arresting, edifying and entertaining play; perhaps a great play. Visitors to New

York should put it on their "must" list, along with the Statue of Liberty, Radio City and the Museum of Natural History.

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FILMS WORTH YOUR MONEY

To say that "The Little Foxes," produced by Samuel Goldwyn, is the best picture now being shown at popular prices is both presumptuous and inadequate. Presumptuous because I have not seen all the numerous pictures current in innumerable theaters all over the country. Inadequate because I think "The Little Foxes" is not only the best of current productions but also one of the finest films ever produced.

"The Little Foxes" is a screen version of the stage play of the same title. It is a sort of middle class "Tobacco Road," without the penury, physical filth and redundant irreverence of that famous tragedy. The Hubbards are not destitute share-croppers, like the Lesters; they are an up and coming business family. But under their veneer of middle class manners the Hubbards might well be blood relations of the Lesters. "The Little Foxes" is an efficient and scrupulously honest experiment in social vivisection which reveals the stark ruthlessness which enabled the poor whites to take the South away from the old slave-holding aristocracy. The story is told as honestly on the screen as it was on the stage, marking another step toward maturity by the films.

Most of the cast which appeared in the play are included in the film. In the leading role, however, Bette Davis replaces Tallulah Bankhead. Miss Davis' performance is a glory to see. If I have ever seen a screen performance to equal hers I cannot remember it. I know I have never seen a better one.

* * * * *

"Citizen Kane," which marks Orson Welles' first spectacular venture in Hollywood, is strictly a stunt picture. The story, which describes the career of a rich man with a penchant for playing around with newspapers, is moderately interesting but a bit boring toward the end. My friends who know about cameras tell me the photography is a standout. I wouldn't know about that, but I was intrigued by such novel devices as conversation across vast interior spaces and the hero moving across a foyer while his image is reflected from numerous mirrors. Aside from the camera work, the picture is just good enough to keep the time used in seeing it from being wasted.

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SOUTH CAROLINA JUDGE DENOUNCES MOB VIOLENCE

Anderson, S. C. (ANP)—At the opening of Court of General Sessions here September 1, Judge G. Duncan Bellenger, of Columbia, S. C., openly denounced mob rule as symbolized by masked groups seeking to take the law into their own hands, and made an appeal for the preservation of American freedom and ideals. He told the county grand jury that mob rule cannot be tolerated by the Government of this country.

Judge Bellenger stated, "I say to you gentlemen, that the laws cannot be enforced and the laws cannot be respected when men with masks take the law into their own hands and set themselves up as court, jury and prosecuting attorney. When that is permitted, law enforcement has been turned over to the mob."

AS YOUTH SEES IT

EDITED BY YOUTH

In a recent excerpt from the "*Michigan Catholic*," the following statement is made: "There is much complaint by speakers at Catholic conventions and writers in Catholic periodicals of neo-paganism, of atheism in colleges and universities, of false irreligious philosophies in secular publications, of indecency in current literature, plays, fashions, dances and night clubs. Too often, it seems to us, Catholics are content with protest. True, speeches and warnings are necessary to bestir people. But at some of our gatherings there is too much talk and not enough reporting of things done of constructive action."

Here might be made a timely comment. It is self-evident that those who have the time and the ability to participate in Catholic Action, and who are willing to do so, can in themselves do very little: partly because of the limitation of scope in a single personality, partly because that will to do is not strong enough to achieve the results which sanctity alone can achieve. Those who do what little writing they can on the subject of interracial justice seek only to light a spark whereby those who read will be so flamed that they cannot but go out and torch the universe with the ideal of soul-equality in all men. It is not enough, therefore, that the pages of this magazine be read, that the words of our great apostles of Interracial Justice be heard—these lines, these utterances must be acted upon.

And who better than Youth to become a brandished torch, a lighter of candles? Let it never be attributed to us as a generation of Catholics that we have been passive—taperless "dead-wood!"

* * * * *

As an extension of the thoughts expressed last month on the subject of education, it is our privilege to be able to quote from the recent address of the Holy Father to Catholic Students: "These readily find common ground with one another in the bond of intellectual training received in institutions of higher learning. There, if intellectual activities are united with good will, they acquire a vast complex of knowledge, varied but precise; but more important, they develop that capacity for personal judgment which is the fruit of long study and observation—that ability methodically and impartially to criticise facts and ideas and to master the most complicated problems . . . In most painful contrast with the light of manifold learning and experience which shines from the well-directed university or college, is rising that darkness which presses upon the world as one of the principal causes of the moral abyss in which it is now struggling. We refer to the divorce that separates a large

portion of our men of learning from Christian thought . . . The present divorce and antagonism between science and religion cannot dim truth or fling it aside from its throne of light. You, to whom divine Providence has given the means to participate widely in higher intellectual training have—especially through ardent participation in Catholic Action—the duty of smoothing the way in many hearts and putting an end to that pernicious divorce, of re-establishing contacts, reuniting bonds, and assuring mutual penetration of those two worlds of knowledge, the higher learning of the universities, and the light revealed by Christ."

There is little comment necessary in the wake of such genuine and God-directed eloquence. It is only left us to realize that the Head of Christ's Church has said to each of us: "You have the *duty* . . ." A duty is a serious thing . . . it is something whose non-observance may cause the loss of souls. And there is another duty . . . one not mentioned by Our Holy Father: the duty of showing him, through our sincere and relentless and unflinching Catholicity, that we realize the need, now more than ever, for close-bonded unity among all Catholics: that we, as Catholic Students, *shall* make ourselves "the heralds of Catholic truth."

* * * * *

You and I know (how many times have we, fortunately, been reminded!) that the root of all present-day evils is the failure to follow the principle of Christ: "Love thy neighbor as thyself" . . . "Even unto the least of these my brethren . . .". It is one thing to be ignorant of these teachings—this is a lack both excusable and pitiable. It is another thing to possess these truths, not to be ignorant of them but to *ignore* them.

For us there can be no excuse. Ours is the gift of Faith: the gift of grace whereby to nurture that Faith, the gift of education whereby to comprehend that Faith; the gift of an era whose chaos cries out for the practical need of that Faith.

To our less fortunate fellows, those who have not learned the word, the Great Judge may say: "You saw a man hungry and you gave him not to eat." To us he may say: "You saw a man thirsting for Faith, and you gave him not to drink. You saw a man trod down by the heel of intolerance, and you stretched not a hand to lift him up. You saw a man shut out by the cold of hate and prejudice, and you warmed him not with the fire of your love. Yet, you were hungry, and I gave you My love for Food. You were in doubt, and I soothed your uncertainty with my Father's promises. You were in danger of infinite death, and I, with My blood, purchased for you, instead, Infinite Life . . .".

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The Holy Father needs us, the world needs us, the cause of peace and tolerance needs us, and The Master, when so many have forgotten Him, needs, somehow, the reassurance that we, at least—His pupils, His "*discipulos*"—have not forgotten Him.

Shall we do nothing to fill this need?

—MARGARET MCCORMACK

FROM HERE AND THERE DURING THE MONTH

● CLERGY CONFERENCE ON NEGRO WELFARE MEETS IN MOBILE

Mobile, Oct. 17.—A meeting of the "Catholic Clergy Conference of Mobile on Negro Welfare" was held yesterday at the residence of the Most Rev. Thomas J. Toolen, Bishop of Mobile.

This conference includes all 38 priests who labor among the Colored in the diocese. The meeting was called to order by the Rev. Vincent Warren, S.S.J., pastor of the Most Pure Heart of Mary Church, Mobile, who is president of the Conference. Bishop Toolen is Director ex-officio and Father Warren was reelected for the third consecutive term as president.

At the morning session much stress was laid on the necessity of getting religious instruction into country places. Over half of the vast Colored population of the diocese lives in rural areas. The plan of motor chapels—trailer chapels and small permanent chapels for rural areas was given due consideration.

● MID-WEST CLERGY SESSION ON NEGRO WELFARE HELD

Kansas City, Oct. 18.—The fall Middle West Clergy Conference on Negro Welfare was held here this week with the Most Rev. Edwin V. O'Hara, Bishop of Kansas City, under whose patronage the meeting is being held, participating in several of the sessions. The Franciscan Fathers of St. Joseph's Parish were hosts to the conference.

A dinner for the delegates Tuesday evening was presided over by Circuit Judge Albert A. Ridge.

The program on Wednesday opened with Solemn Mass in St. Joseph's Church, with the Rev. Augustine Bork, S.J., of St. Louis, as celebrant. The Rev. Francis S. McCardle of Kansas City delivered the sermon.

Discussions were heard on "The Priest in Negro Civic Life," led by the Very Rev. Philip Steffes, O.F.M. Cap., of Milwaukee; on "The Knights of St. Peter Claver," led by the Rev. Angelus Schaefer, O.F.M., of Kansas City, Kans.; on "Home Visiting by the Pastor," led by the Rev. William Bambrink, S.V.D., of Chicago, and on "Means to Safeguard the Faith of Eighth Grade Pupils," led by the Rev. Constantine Schaaf, O.F.M., former pastor of the Negroes in Kansas City.

● FLORIDA HOUSING PROJECT HONORS NEGRO PIONEER

Jacksonville, Fla., Oct. 18.—The local Housing Authority has officially announced that the second low-rent housing project for Negroes now under construction in the "Hansontown" slum area, has been named the Joseph H. Blodgett Homes in honor of a Negro, now deceased, who pioneered in the building and developing of the first high-class local residential subdivision for members of his race.

This action by the Authority came at the request and upon recommendation of the Negro Advisory Committee to the Authority, and was concurred in by the United States Housing Authority.

The new Joseph H. Blodgett Homes will house 700 low income families and cover 53 acres of land. It is the largest single slum area to be cleared in the United States to date.

● ARCHDIOCESE WILL OBSERVE FEAST OF BLESSED MARTIN

New Orleans, Sept. 26.—Beginning this year, the feast of Blessed Martin de Porres, November 5, will be observed in all churches and oratories of the Archdiocese of New Orleans, the Most Rev. Joseph F. Rummel has announced to the clergy.

● YOUNG COLORED PRIEST FROM U. S. GOING TO GOLD COAST OF AFRICA

Bay St. Louis, Miss., Sept. 30.—The Rev. George Wilson, S.V.D., young Colored priest of the Society of the Divine Word, who was ordained just this year at St. Augustine's Seminary here, has been appointed to do missionary work in the Society's mission territory located on the Gold Coast of Africa.

The Society already has eight priests and two Brothers in Gold Coast missions. Two of the priests, the Rev. Joseph Bowers, S.V.D., and the Rev. John Dauphine, S.V.D., are Colored priests who also made their studies for the priesthood at the Seminary in Bay St. Louis.

Father Wilson, a native of New York City, received his primary education from the Josephite Fathers at St. Joseph's School, Wilmington, Del. His studies for the priesthood were made in East Troy, Wis., and Bay St. Louis, where he was ordained on January 6, 1941. For several weeks, Father Wilson has been assisting the Rev. Joseph Holken, S.V.D., in parochial work at St. Rose of Lima Church here.

A Solemn Mass was celebrated by Father Wilson in St. Augustine's Seminary chapel on Sunday morning at 9:00 o'clock. The Rev. Clarence J. Howard, S.V.D., editor of *St. Augustine's Messenger*, preached the sermon.

● MASS SAID FIRST TIME FOR COLORED CONGREGATION IN MISSOURI TOWN

Springfield, Mo., Oct. 6.—For the first time in the history of Springfield, the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass has been offered here before a Colored congregation by Father Michael, O.S.B., who arrived in Springfield to make arrangements for the establishment of a Colored mission.

The Colored Welfare Home was chosen as the scene of the first Mass. In welcoming Father Michael, William Higgs, chairman of the welfare home board, stated he was proud to have the Sacrifice of the Mass offered in the home.

● GUICHARD PARRIS APPOINTED DIRECTOR OF NYA NEGRO AFFAIRS

The appointment of Guichard Parris as director of Negro Affairs was announced today by Miss Helen M. Harris, National Youth Administrator for New York City and Long Island. Mr. Parris, formerly with the NYA Consultation Service, succeeds Robert J. Elzy who resigned to return to his previous position as executive director of the Brooklyn Urban League-Lincoln Settlement, Inc.

A graduate of Amherst, Guichard Parris received his M.A. from Columbia University and later studied at the University of Paris, France, and the New York School of Social Work. He was a faculty member of Livingston College and Lincoln and Atlanta Universities, and is now secretary of the employment committee of the Catholic Interracial Council.

BOOKS

MARIAN ANDERSON: By KOSTI VEHANEN. New York. The McGraw-Hill Book Company. 1941. 270 pages. \$2.50.

Those who love and appreciate good music will find this portrait of Marian Anderson by Kosti Vehanen a source of delight. Informal in arrangement, the book offers a complete picture of the life and spirit of the famous Negro singer, and relates, incidentally, many of the author's recollections of well known names throughout the world. The style is touched with the charm and insight of artistic vision and creates a vivid impression on the reader. Kosti Vehanen wishes to reveal Marian Anderson as a sincere, generous individual devoted to her art and desirous of making the world a happier place. In this he succeeds admirably.

In 1931 Kosti Vehanen first heard Marian Anderson sing in Berlin and ever since he has been her accompanist. A composer in his own right he is well equipped to discuss the values and possibilities of music. These words express the reactions he felt on one of the first occasions that he heard Marian Anderson sing:

"It made me think of an exquisite flower that stands alone in a deep forest, where no human being has ever trod, the roots drinking the aged nectar from the soil, rich with every substance that sun, rain and fire can create, trembling with tenderness never before felt. So the sound I heard swelled to majestic power, the flower opened its petals to full brilliance; and I was enthralled by one of nature's rare wonders."

They express better than anything how much Kosti Vehanen appreciates the singer's contribution to the world of interpretative art. It is interesting to note that he finds her most decidedly a Handel-Soubert singer because the tragic feeling in these composers' songs seem to be most congenial to her voice and character. This seems to be the reason she so attracted Sibelius. There is always a depth, feeling, and understanding in her interpretation of the Finnish composer's music.

Music is without doubt the most spiritual of the arts. A great singer can move thousands to silence, exaltation, tears, depending on the impression she desires to create. Hence,

says Mr. Vehanen, is the greatest applause one can receive because then one knows that the audience is completely moved. Marian Anderson has experienced this reaction several times to her rendition of "The Crucifixion."

It is a greater experience to hear a voice than to read about it, but this book seems to catch a spark of the actual tone. It will prove an incentive to many to hear Miss Anderson sing and moreover will reveal her personality with deftness and clarity to those who do not already know her.

—M. O'N.

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"POEMS" By MAURICE C. FIELDS. *The Exposition Press, New York.* 64 Pages. \$1.50.

Several months ago there appeared in this column a review of Maurice C. Fields' "Testament of Youth." Now, quickly following its publication, has come another posthumous volume—this one entitled simply, "Poems."

What was said of the former book is true, though in a more modified sense, of this latter also. Here, again, words are used loquaciously—chosen with that care which alone begets spontaneity of effect; here, again, is the poetic instrument bowed with fingers schooled to produce sounds low and thought-mellowed, sounds tenuous and pain-thin. Here, again, is the voice of a poet.

Yet there is a vast difference between the two books—and it must be admitted that this second book lacks the integrity of utterance which characterized the first. Fields, in this book, is a child of his age; in the other, he was the child of all ages. In this book he echoes many of the twentieth century surface-philosophies; in the other, he seemed to transcend them.

It is not to be expected that one can live in an age and escape being, in some sense at least, its child. Nor is it to be considered a lack of greatness in an artist if, at some time, he echoes the thought of his age and expresses that thought in contemporary dictum. Fields shows us amply, in the earlier book, his capacity for timelessness. He shows us now his ability to create beauty out of the much-used poetic mold of his contemporaries.

Most noticeable among the characteristics displayed in this volume is a definite talent in the use of the semi-epigrammatic form. In *Cynic's Song* we find the following last stanza:

Oh! beauty flees, the soul grows mute;
oaks break where reeds are bent;
and snug within all captive fruit
glides disillusionment.

Here is simplicity, clarity, directness of utterance. Here is a wisdom which, though tinged with the attitude of its age, remains indestructible. A still more striking example of that combined epigrammatism and twentieth-centuryism lies in the poem "Fride":

Pride in this life is all the heart recaptures—
banished from love, shorn of mere arrogance;
mute to all song, sterile to former raptures,
the heart survives—pride its sole sustenance.

For only in pride is there release from sorrow—
a quasi-armistice from ceaseless fears;
pride is the mail the stricken heart must borrow—
denied the pale, cold futile balm of tears.

At first reading one might wonder how much of this thought is conviction, how much conventionality. Yet there is salvation in the words "in this life." Here, again, is the influence of time destroyed. There *is* another world which knows no pride!

If for no other poem, this book must be read for that magnificently Medieval utterance "*Pilgrimage To Glory*,"—lines written about our own Blessed Martin. With this one exception, however, it must be said that Fields is less successful in the longer metier than in that of the shorter epigram or lyric. The poem "*Blood Crying From The Ground*," dealing with the tremendously vital subject of lynching, fails in impact, somehow, because it appears wordy and discursive. One feels this thought might have been expressed more forcefully in fewer words.

Indeed, one frequently receives the impression that Fields is in love with words . . . an admirable thing, but one which often detracts from the unity of the poem. One sometimes finds one's-self lost in a word-maze such as this:

vague, atavistic monsters reave the web.
A mad moon suddenly in frenzied riot
witches the waves to spurn their viscious ebb . . .

One also finds, on occasion, as in "*Heimweh*," an experiment in page-pattern, which, coupled with a somewhat indecisive word-quality detracts from the effectiveness of thought-conveyance. Yet it must be remembered that, at no time whatever does Fields do anything unbeautiful! With the possible exception of that vastly humorous and satiristic selection, "*Meat-onomic Determinism*."

Many of his love lyrics are superb (and these constitute a great part of his book). They possess an intensity of feeling which lends a deep and vibrant sincerity to their lines.

One would wish to quote endlessly, but this cannot be done. Be it enough to say that here is a book of remarkable beauty, combining delicacy and strength . . . a book which can say, in "*Moonlight Sonata*":

Stroke the keys softly, for the mellow notes
are fragile;
They spill beneath your touch in silver
iridescence,
And I see the very moonlight trickling through
your fingers,
Trickling - slipping - flickering - spinning
Into the dimness of the room." . . .

—a book which can take its place among the utterances of all times and all races with these words:

I have been up to a high green hill
and watched the town surge up like sea—
Master of space and the wild mind's will,
I felt akin Divinity.

Blinding to see and too much to bear,
infinite mystery and awe
unveiled the vast eternal sphere
of God's inexorable law . . .

—M. Mc.

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